

NetworkX Tutorial

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Introduction

NetworkX = Network “X” = NX (for short)

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NetworkX is a Python-based package for the creation, manipulation, and study of the structure, dynamics, and function of complex networks. The name means **Network “X”** and we pronounce it **NX**. We will refer to (and import) NetworkX as NX for the sake of brevity.

The structure of a graph or network is encoded in the **edges** (connections, links, ties, arcs, bonds) between **nodes** (vertices, sites, actors). If unqualified, by graph we mean a simple undirected graph, i.e. no self-loops and no multiple edges are allowed. By a network we usually mean a graph with weights (fields, properties) on nodes and/or edges.

The potential audience for NetworkX include: mathematicians, physicists, biologists, computer scientists, social scientists. The current state of the art of the (young and rapidly growing) science of complex networks is presented in Albert and Barabási [BA02], Newman [Newman03], and Dorogovtsev and Mendes [DM03]. See also the classic texts [Bollobas01], [Diestel97] and [West01] for graph theoretic results and terminology. For basic graph algorithms, we recommend the texts of Sedgewick, e.g. [Sedgewick01] and [Sedgewick02] and the modern survey of Brandes and Erlebach [BE05].

Why Python? Past experience showed this approach to maximize productivity, power, multi-disciplinary scope (our application test beds included large communication, social, data and biological networks), and platform independence. This philosophy does not exclude using whatever other language is appropriate for a specific subtask, since Python is also an excellent “glue” language [Langtangen04]. Equally important, Python is free, well-supported and a joy to use. Among the many guides to Python, we recommend the documentation at <http://www.python.org> and the text by Alex Martelli [Martelli03].

NetworkX is free software; you can redistribute it and/or modify it under the terms of the **LGPL** (GNU Lesser General Public License) as published by the Free Software Foundation; either version 2.1 of the License, or (at your option) any later version. Please see the license for more information.

Obtaining and Installing NetworkX

You need Python. We recommend the latest stable release available from <http://www.python.org/>.

The latest version of NetworkX can be found at <http://networkx.lanl.gov/>. NetworkX will work on multiple platforms.

On Linux platforms, download the current tarball numbered, say, networkx-x.xx.tar.gz, to an appropriate directory, say /home/username/networks

```
gzip -d -c networkx-x.xx.tar.gz|tar xvf-
cd networkxx-x.xx
# run the following with your preferred Python version
python setup.py build
# change to a user id that is allowed to do installation
python setup.py install
```

This will install NetworkX in your Python site-packages directory.

If you don't have permission to install software on your system, you can install into another directory using the --prefix or --home flags to setup.py.

For example

```
python setup.py install --prefix=/home/username/python
or
python setup.py install --home=~
```

If you didn't install in the standard Python site-packages directory you will need to set your PYTHONPATH variable to the alternate location. See <http://docs.python.org/inst/search-path.html> for further details.

A Quick Tour

Building and drawing a small graph

We assume you can start an interactive Python session. At the time of writing we require Python Release 2.3.4 or later. (Although not required, if you want to run the unit tests you will need Python 2.4 or later.) We will assume that you are familiar with Python terminology (see the official Python website <http://www.python.org> for more information).

```
%python
Python 2.3.4 (#1, Jun  3 2004, 14:57\21)
[GCC 3.2.2 20030222 (Red Hat Linux 3.2.2-5)] on linux2
Type "help", "copyright", "credits" or "license" for more information.
>>>
```

(If you did not install NX into the Python site directory it might be useful to add the directory where NX is installed to your PYTHONPATH.)

After starting Python, import the networkx module with (the recommended way)

```
>>> import networkx as NX
```

or using the usual mode for interactive experimentation that might clobber some names already in your namespace

```
>>> from networkx import *
```

If this import fails, it means that Python cannot find the installed module. Check your installation and your PYTHONPATH.

To save some repetition, in all the examples below we will assume that NX has been imported with

```
>>> from networkx import *
```

To create a new (simple) graph, call `Graph()` with zero or more arguments.

```
>>> G=Graph()
```

When called with zero arguments, one obtains the empty graph without any nodes or edges. In NX every graph or network is a Python “object”, and in Python the functions associated with an “object” are known as methods.

The following classes are provided:

Graph

The basic operations common to graph-like classes. This class implements a “simple graph”; it ignores multiple edges between two nodes and does not allow edges from a node to itself (self-loops).

DiGraph

Operations common to digraphs, simple graphs with directed edges. (A subclass of Graph.)

XGraph

A flexible (and experimental) graph class that allows data/weights/labels/objects to be associated with each edge. While a simple graph by default, this class can also allow multiple edges and self loops. Thus, it can be used to represent a weighted graph, pseudograph, or network. This additional flexibility leads to some degradation in performance, though usually not significant. (A subclass of Graph.)

XDiGraph

A directed version of an XGraph. (A subclass of DiGraph.)

Empty graph-like objects are created with

- `G=Graph()`
- `G=DiGraph()`

- `G=XGraph()`
- `G=XGraph(selfloops=True, multiedges=True)`
- `G=XDiGraph(selfloops=True, multiedges=True)`

Only the `XGraph` and `XDiGraph` classes allow for the `selfloops` and `multiedges` options.

This package implements graphs using data structures based on an adjacency list implemented as a node-centric dictionary of dictionaries. The dictionary contains keys corresponding to the nodes and the values are dictionaries of neighboring node keys with the value `None` (or edge data for `XGraph()`, or a list of edge data for `XGraph(multiedges=True)`). This allows fast addition, deletion and lookup of nodes and neighbors in large graphs. The underlying datastructure should only be visible in the modules `base.py` and `xbase.py`. In all other modules, graph-like objects are manipulated solely via the methods defined in `base.py` and `xbase.py`, and not by acting directly on the datastructure. This design allows one to replace the ‘dicts-of-dicts’-based datastructure with an alternative datastructure without excessive effort.

The following shorthand is used throughout NetworkX documentation and code: (we use mathematical notation n, v, w, \dots to indicate a node, v =vertex=node).

`G, G1, G2, H, etc:`

Graphs

`n, n1, n2, u, v, v1, v2:`

nodes (vertices)

`nlist, vlist:`

a list of nodes (vertices)

`nbunch, vbunch:`

a “bunch” of nodes (vertices). an `nbunch` is any iterable container of nodes that is not itself a node in the graph. (It can be an iterable or an iterator, e.g. a list, set, graph, file, etc..)

`e=(n1,n2):`

an edge (a Python 2-tuple) in `Graph` and `DiGraph`, also written `n1-n2` (if undirected) and `n1->n2` (if directed).

`e=(n1,n2,x):`

an edge (a Python 3-tuple) in `XGraph` and `XDiGraph`, containing the two nodes connected and the edge data/label/object stored associated with the edge. The object `x`, or a list of objects (if `multiedges=True`), can be obtained using `G.get_edge(n1,n2)`. In `XGraph` and `XDiGraph`, `G.add_edge(n1,n2)` is equivalent to `G.add_edge(n1,n2, None)`. In the case of multiple edges between nodes `n1` and `n2`, one can use `G.delete_multiedge(n1,n2)` to delete all edges between `n1` and `n2`.

`elist:`

a list of edges (as 2- or 3-tuples)

ebunch:

a bunch of edges (as tuples) an ebunch is any iterable (non-string) container of edge-tuples. (Similar to nbunch, also see `add_edge`).

Warning:

- Although any hashable object can be used as a node, one should not change the object after it has been added as a node (since the hash can depend on the object contents).
- The ordering of objects within an arbitrary nbunch/ebunch can be machine- or implementation-dependent.
- Algorithms applicable to arbitrary nbunch/ebunch should treat them as once-through-and-exhausted iterable containers.
- `len(nbunch)` and `len(ebunch)` need not be defined.

Graph methods

A Graph object `G` has the following primitive methods associated with it:
(You can use `dir(G)` to inspect the methods associated with object `G`.)

1. Non-mutating Graph methods:

- `len(G)` *number of nodes in G*
- `G.has_node(n)`
- `n in G` *(equivalent to `G.has_node(n)`)*
- `G.info()`
- `G.nodes()`
- `G.nodes_iter()`
- `G.has_edge(n1,n2)`
- `G.edges()`, `G.edges(n)`, `G.edges(nbunch)`
- `G.edges_iter()`, `G.edges_iter(n)`, `G.edges_iter(nbunch)`
- `G.neighbors(n)`
- `G[n]` *(equivalent to `G.neighbors(n)`)*
- `G.neighbors_iter(n)` *# iterator over neighbors*
- `G.number_of_nodes()`
- `G.number_of_edges()`
- `G.node_boundary(nbunch)`
- `G.node_boundary(nbunch1,nbunch2)`
- `G.edge_boundary(nbunch)`
- `G.edge_boundary(nbunch1,nbunch2)`
- `G.degree(n)`, `G.degree(nbunch)`
- `G.degree_iter(n)`, `G.degree_iter(nbunch)`
- `G.is_directed()`

The following return a new graph:

- `G.subgraph(nbunch)`
- `G.subgraph(nbunch, create_using=H)`

- `G.copy()`
- `G.to_directed()`
- `G.to_undirected()`

2. Mutating Graph methods:

- `G.add_node(n)`, `G.add_nodes_from(nbunch)`
- `G.delete_node(n)`, `G.delete_nodes_from(nbunch)`
- `G.add_edge(n1,n2)`, `G.add_edge(e)`
- `G.add_edges_from(ebunch)`
- `G.delete_edge(n1,n2)`, `G.delete_edge(e)`,
- `G.delete_edges_from(ebunch)`
- `G.add_path(nlist)`
- `G.add_cycle(nlist)`
- `G.clear()`
- `G.subgraph(nbunch,inplace=True)`

Names of classes/objects use the CapWords convention, e.g. `Graph`, `XDiGraph`. Names of functions and methods use the lowercase_words_separated_by_underscores convention, e.g. `petersen_graph()`, `G.add_node(10)`.

`G` can be inspected interactively by typing “`G`” (without the quotes). This will reply something like `<networkx.base.Graph object at 0x40179a0c>`. (On linux machines with CPython the hexadecimal address is the memory location of the object.) One can use `G.info()` for a brief summary of the graph properties.

Examples

Create an empty graph with zero nodes and zero edges.

```
>>> from networkx import *
>>> G=Graph()
```

`G` can be grown in several ways. By adding one node at a time:

```
>>> G.add_node(1)
```

by adding a list of nodes:

```
>>> G.add_nodes_from([2,3])
```

or by adding any `nbunch` of nodes (see above definition of an `nbunch`):

```
>>> H=path_graph(10)
>>> G.add_nodes_from(H)
```

(`H` can be a graph, iterator, string, set, or even a file.)

Any hashable object (except `None`) can represent a node, e.g. a text string, an image, an XML object, another `Graph`, a customized node object, etc.

```
>>> G.add_node(H)
```

(You should not change the object if the hash depends on its contents.)

G can also be grown by adding one edge at a time:

```
>>> G.add_edge( (1,2) )
```

by adding a list of edges:

```
>>> G.add_edges_from([(1,2),(1,3)])
```

or by adding any ebunch of edges (see above definition of an ebunch):

```
>>> G.add_edges_from(G.edges())
```

One can demolish the graph in a similar fashion; using `delete_node`, `delete_nodes_from`, `delete_edge` and `delete_edges_from`, e.g.

```
>>> G.delete_node(H)
```

There are no complaints when adding existing nodes or edges. For example: after removing all nodes and edges,

```
>>> G.clear()
>>> G.add_edges_from([(1,2),(1,3)])
>>> G.add_node(1)
>>> G.add_edge((1,2))
```

will add new nodes/edges as required and stay quiet if they are already present.

```
>>> G.add_node("spam")
```

At this stage the graph G consists of 4 nodes and 2 edges, as can be seen by:

```
>>> number_of_nodes(G)
4
>>> number_of_edges(G)
2
```

we can examine them with:

```
>>> G.nodes()
[1, 2, 3, 'spam']
>>> G.edges()
[(1, 2), (1, 3)]
```

Drawing a small graph

NetworkX does not provide sophisticated graph drawing tools. We do provide elementary drawing tools as well as an interface to use the open source Graphviz software package. These reside in `networkx.drawing`, and will be imported if possible. See the drawing section for details.

```
>>> import pylab as P
```

To test if the import of `networkx.drawing` was successful draw `G` using one of:

```
>>> draw(G)
>>> draw_random(G)
>>> draw_circular(G)
>>> draw_spectral(G)
```

when drawing to an interactive display. Note that you may need to issue a `pylab`

```
>>> P.show()
```

command if you are not using matplotlib in interactive mode (<http://matplotlib.sourceforge.net/faq.html#>)
Or use

```
>>> draw(G)
>>> P.savefig("path.ps")
```

to write to the file “path.ps” in the local directory. If graphviz and pygraphviz or pydot are available on your system, you can also use:

```
>>> draw_graphviz(G)
>>> write_dot(G, 'file.dot')
```

You may find it useful to interactively test code using “ipython -pylab”, which combines the power of ipython and matplotlib.

Functions for analyzing graph properties

The structure of `G` can be analyzed using various graph theoretic functions such as:

```
>>> connected_components(G)
[[1, 2, 3], ['spam']]

>>> sorted(dgree(G))
[0, 1, 1, 2]

>>> clustering(G)
[0.0, 0.0, 0.0, 0.0]
```


Some functions defined on the nodes, e.g. `degree()` and `clustering()`, can be given a single node or an nbunch of nodes as argument. If a single node is specified, then a single value is returned. If an iterable nbunch is specified, then the function will return a list of values. With no argument, the function will return a list of values at all nodes of the graph.

```
>>> degree(G,1)
2
>>> G.degree(1)
2

>>> sorted(degree(G,[1,2]))
[1, 2]

>>> sorted(degree(G))
[0, 1, 1, 2]
```

When called with the “`with_labels=True`” option a dict with nodes as keys and function values as arguments is returned.

```
>>> degree(G,[1,2],with_labels=True)
{1: 2, 2: 1}
>>> degree(G,with_labels=True)
{1: 2, 2: 1, 3: 1, 'spam': 0}
```

Graph generators and graph operations

In addition to constructing graphs node-by-node or edge-by-edge, they can also be generated by:

1. Applying classic graph operations, such as:

<code>subgraph(G, nbunch)</code>	- induce subgraph of G on nodes in nbunch
<code>union(G1,G2)</code>	- graph union
<code>disjoint_union(G1,G2)</code>	- graph union assuming all nodes are different
<code>cartesian_product(G1,G2)</code>	- return Cartesian product graph
<code>compose(G1,G2)</code>	- combine graphs identifying nodes common to both
<code>complement(G)</code>	- graph complement
<code>create_empty_copy(G)</code>	- return an empty copy of the same graph class
<code>convert_to_undirected(G)</code>	- return an undirected representation of G
<code>convert_to_directed(G)</code>	- return a directed representation of G

2. Using a call to one of the classic small graphs, e.g.

```
>>> petersen=petersen_graph()
>>> tutte=tutte_graph()
>>> maze=sedgewick_maze_graph()
>>> tet=tetrahedral_graph()
```

3. Using a (constructive) generator for a classic graph, e.g.

```
>>> K_5=complete_graph(5)
>>> K_3_5=complete_bipartite_graph(3,5)
>>> barbell=barbell_graph(10,10)
>>> lollipop=lollipop_graph(10,20)
```

4. Using a stochastic graph generator, e.g.

```
>>> er=erdos_renyi_graph(100,0.15)
>>> ws=watts_strogatz_graph(30,3,0.1)
>>> ba=barabasi_albert_graph(100,5)
>>> red=random_lobster(100,0.9,0.9)
```

Graph IO

Reading a graph from a file

```
>>> G=tetrahedral_graph()
```

Write to adjacency list format

```
>>> write_adjlist(G, "tetrahedral.adjlist")
```

Read from adjacency list format

```
>>> H=read_adjlist("tetrahedral.adjlist")
```

Write to edge list format

```
>>> write_edgelist(G, "tetrahedral.edgelist")
```

Read from edge list format

```
>>> H=read_edgelist("tetrahedral.edgelist")
```

See also [Interfacing with other tools](#) below for how to draw graphs with matplotlib or graphviz.

Graphs with multiple edges and self-loops

See the `XGraph` and `XDiGraph` classes. For example, to build Euler's famous graph of the bridges of Königsberg over the Pregel river, one can use:

```
>>> K=XGraph(name="Königsberg", multiedges=True, selfloops=False)
>>> K.add_edges_from([("A","B","Honey Bridge"),
...                  ("A","B","Blacksmith's Bridge"),
...                  ("A","C","Green Bridge"),
...                  ("A","C","Connecting Bridge"),
...                  ("A","D","Merchant's Bridge"),
...                  ("C","D","High Bridge"),
...                  ("B","D","Wooden Bridge")])
>>> K.degree("A")
5
```

Directed Graphs

The `DiGraph` class provides operations common to digraphs (graphs with directed edges). A subclass of `Graph`, `Digraph` adds the following methods to those of `Graph`:

- `out_edges`
- `out_edges_iter`
- `in_edges`
- `in_edges_iter`
- `successors=out_neighbors=neighbors`
- `successors_iter=out_neighbors_iter=neighbors_iter`
- `predecessors=in_neighbors`
- `predecessors_iter=in_neighbors_iter`
- `out_degree`
- `out_degree_iter`
- `in_degree`
- `in_degree_iter`

See `networkx.DiGraph` for more documentation.

Interfacing with other tools

NetworkX provides interfaces to `matplotlib` and `graphviz` for graph layout (node and edge positioning) and drawing. We also use `matplotlib` for graph spectra and in some drawing operations. Without either, one can still use the basic graph-related functions.

See the graph drawing section for details on how to install and use these tools.

Matplotlib

```
>>> G=tetrahedral_graph()
>>> draw(G)
```

Graphviz

```
>>> G=tetrahedral_graph()
>>> write_dot(G,"tetrahedral.dot")
```

Specialized Topics

Graphs composed of general objects

For most applications, nodes will have string or integer labels. The power of Python (“everything is an object”) allows us to construct graphs with ANY hashable object as a node. (The Python object None is not allowed as a node). Note however that this will not work with non-Python datastructures, e.g. building a graph on a wrapped Python version of graphviz).

For example, one can construct a graph with Python mathematical functions as nodes, and where two mathematical functions are connected if they are in the same chapter in some Handbook of Mathematical Functions. E.g.

```
>>> from math import *
>>> G=Graph()
>>> G.add_node(acos)
>>> G.add_node(sinh)
>>> G.add_node(cos)
>>> G.add_node(tanh)
>>> G.add_edge(acos,cos)
>>> G.add_edge(sinh,tanh)
>>> sorted(G.nodes())
[<built-in function acos>, <built-in function cos>, <built-in function sinh>, <built-
```

As another example, one can build (meta) graphs using other graphs as the nodes.

We have found this power quite useful, but its abuse can lead to unexpected surprises unless one is familiar with Python. If in doubt, consider using `convert_node_labels_to_integers` to obtain a more traditional graph with integer labels.

Imbedding general objects onto edges

An XGraph and XDiGraph object allows arbitrary objects to be associated with an edge. In these classes edges are 3-tuples (n1,n2,x), representing an edge between nodes n1 and n2 that is decorated with the object x (not necessarily hashable). For example, n1 and n2 can be protein objects from the RCSB Protein Data Bank, and x can refer to an XML record of a publication detailing experimental observations of their interaction.

These classes are still in the experimental stage, with not all the graph-related functions and operations tested on them. Use with caution and tell us if you find them useful.

Unit tests

For most modules, say `base.py`, the command “`python base.py`” will run several unit tests in the `networkx/tests` subdirectory. This requires the use of Python 2.4 or later. To run all the unit tests, run “`python setup.py test`” in the base directory or run “`python test.py`” in the `networkx/tests` subdirectory.

Not everything is an object

NX developed from the need to analyze dynamics on a diverse collection of large networks and we have thus far refused to objectify all the mathematical structures of graph theory down to the atomic level. Neither nodes nor edges are implemented as Classes. A node can be any hashable object (except `None`), and an edge is a 2-tuple $(n1, n2)$ of nodes (in the case of `Graph` and `DiGraph`) or a 3-tuple $(n1, n2, x)$ (in the case of `XGraph` and `XDiGraph`) consisting of two nodes and an object `x` decorating that edge.

References

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